



THE DRAGON'S DIET: FORCE STRUCTURE ALLOCATIONS IN THE NEW-AGE ARMY

By Colonel Robert D. Walk

The Green Dragon is insatiable. He constantly hungers for more—more Soldiers, more equipment, and more funding. And the same can be said for every branch in the Army. There are never enough allocations to cover the requirements. While it may seem that allocations are determined through the use of voodoo and the mystic arts, the process actually involves a “not so” simple Army function.

As set forth in the *National Defense Authorization Act*, there are congressional limits on the numbers of Soldiers in each of the Services and Service components. The Army limits for Fiscal Year 2010 are—

- 562,400 for the Regular Army (Component 1).
- 358,200 for the Army National Guard (ARNG) (Component 2).
- 205,000 for the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) (Component 3).

Within the limits set by Congress, the Army must further delineate the way spaces are allocated among the operating forces, generating forces, and individual accounts. The operating forces, or the “table of organization and equipment (TOE) Army,” are generally considered to be the deployable force. The generating forces make up the “table of distribution and allowances Army.” Individual accounts are commonly referred to as *trainee, transient, holdee, and student (TTHS)* accounts.

TTHS: Unavailable Dragons

The TTHS account consists of Soldiers who are not available to be placed in units. In general, personnel who are on permanent change of station (PCS) orders to attend training or on temporary duty (TDY) orders en route to a new location are included in the TTHS account. Most of these Soldiers are officers and enlisted personnel who are involved in initial-entry training. However, officers who are students at the U.S. Army War College and sergeants major who are students at the U.S. Army Sergeant's Major Academy are also included in this group. In addition, transients (those on PCS orders between stations) and holdees (those incarcerated or in the hospital) are also in the group. About 13 percent of the Component 1 strength is

included in the TTHS account. About 2 percent of Components 2 and 3 strength (primarily initial-entry training Soldiers) are included in this account.

Generating Force: Building Better Dragons

The generating force generates and sustains the operating force. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (the major Army command of the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear [CBRN] School), is part of the generating force, as are the program managers who develop the material used by Dragon Soldiers. While all three components have generating forces, the Regular Army is required to have a larger generating force than the other two components.¹ The generating force of the Regular Army consists of about 100,000 Soldiers; the Reserve Component generating forces are much smaller. The primary USAR Chemical Corps generating force is the 3d Chemical Brigade, 102d Training Division (Maneuver Support), 80th Training Command (Total Army School System). In addition, USAR personnel also teach Intermediate-Level Education and USAR drilling individual mobilization augmentees teach the Reserve Component Captain's Career Course at the CBRN School. The Reserve Component generating force also includes noncommissioned officer academies.

Operating Force: The Force of Decision or the “Fighting Dragon”

The deployable Army's divisions, brigades, battalions, and companies make up the TOE Army. This is how the Army “earns its pay,” and this is where careers are made—or lost. With regard to the Chemical Corps, this group consists of the 48th Chemical Brigade and its subordinate organizations from Component 1; the 31st and 404th Chemical Brigades and other assorted battalions, companies, and detachments from Component 2; and the 415th Chemical Brigade, the USAR Consequence Management Unit, and other assorted battalions, companies, and detachments from Component 3. Yes, there are chemical brigades in the ARNG and USAR! But how are they allocated?

Designing the Dragon: The Force Allocation Process (Simplified)

Based on the *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* and other defense strategic guidance, the Army uses the Total Army Analysis process to determine force structure needs within the various branches. For example, if the Army were to determine that 30,000 Soldiers were needed to fulfill the requirements of the Chemical Corps, the branch would be allocated as—

- 6 brigade headquarters.
- 24 battalion headquarters.
- 15 Biological Integrated Detection System companies.
- 20 combat support companies.
- 4 wheeled smoke companies.
- 4 mechanized smoke companies.
- 6 technical-escort companies.
- 10 assorted detachments.

The total of 30,000 would also include Soldiers assigned to these units and CBRN specialists assigned to other branch elements throughout the Army force structure.

It would be great to have 30,000 Regular Army Soldiers in the Chemical Corps—even in our hypothetical example! But the needs of each component must be managed against the needs of the Army; Components 2 and 3 also get their “fair share” of the force structure.


In our example, 8,000 unit and individual Soldiers have historically been applied to Component 1. Increasing this number would mean decreasing the number of personnel in other branches. This cannot be accomplished except by senior Army leaders. Therefore, the Chemical Corps manages about 8,000 spaces, including Soldiers in units that are in other branches (which effectively reduces that number to 6,000 spaces actually managed by the Chemical Corps). However, all is not lost. Through negotiation, the force structure is divided among the various components, and Components 2 and 3 each have about 8,000 chemical spaces allocated between chemical and other units. Because brigades and battalions are highly desirable, they are likely to be divided fairly equal, given that they would require a sufficient number of companies to justify the headquarters. Unfortunately, there are some catches.

First, there is unallocated strength. There are about 8,000 Soldiers applied to each component, for a total of about 24,000. However, the requirement is for 30,000 Soldiers; therefore, 6,000 are unallocated. In the past, this group was referred to as “Component 4,” but that term has since fallen out of favor. No matter what it is called, the group represents a requirement that is unfilled unless a component chief decides to accept it at the expense of something else. A case in point involved the ARNG and USAR decision to replace smoke units with other types of units, thereby resulting in the loss of most smoke capabilities.

Second, there are other branch considerations. For example, if the Infantry Branch were directed to eliminate 2,000 positions from within its units, the branch chief might choose to eliminate CBRN spaces in their companies to prevent the loss of so many infantry positions. This would be an Infantry Branch decision, not a Chemical Corps one, although the Chemical Corps loses people.

Third, the Army may change its focus. Based on the *QDR*, Total Army Analysis, and deployment reality, the Army may “tax” certain branches for force structure so that building might take place elsewhere. For example, there was once a Coast Artillery Branch that was quite powerful. After World War II, there was no longer a need for the Coast Artillery Branch and the Air Defense Artillery Branch was born from its ashes. A branch might also be completely eliminated by scattering its components among other branches. The Chemical Corps narrowly escaped such a fate in the 1970s, when the Army transferred the smoke function to the Corps of Engineers, the chemical ammunition function to the Ordnance Corps, and the decontamination and protection functions to the Quartermaster Corps. It was only the reluctance of Congress and the discovery that the Soviet Union was preparing for a chemical war that prevented the total elimination of the Chemical Corps at that time.

Fourth, component chiefs must make decisions based on the needs of their particular components. For example, if the USAR chemical force structure is not being deployed, the USAR may decide to convert that structure to something that is more relevant to current requirements. Again, the branch pays in personnel for someone else’s decision.

The continued existence of the Chemical Corps requires the constant, unavoidable fight for relevancy. The Chief of Chemical and the Chemical Corps must constantly reinvent the branch by finding new ways to support the warfighter. 

Endnote:

¹U.S. Code, Title 10, *Armed Forces*, 5 January 2009.

References:

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